

Mr. Chairman,

I have served on the Rules Committee since my first term. As Majority and Minority Leader, and President Pro Tempore, I have worked continually for reforms to modernize this institution -- streamlining the committee system to move bills more effectively, bringing radio and television to the Senate, and championing ethics and campaign finance reforms.

As Majority Leader in the 100th Congress, I filed cloture eight times on campaign finance reform legislation. Since then, I have spoken many times in support of legislation that would provide for voluntary spending limits and public financing, and curb the influence of Political Action Committees.

The incessant money chase is rotting the institution from within. It makes every Senator a part-time Senator, and full-time fund raiser. Few challengers could do today as I did when I was first elected to the Senate in 1958 -- run a joint campaign with the late Senator Jennings Randolph, for two open Senate seats with a treasury of less than \$50,000. Our campaign finance system today puts congressional seats on the auction block, and has been breeding apathy and mistrust in the American electorate for a long time.

I supported the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 (McCain-Feingold), but, as I

said at the time, it does not go far enough. I believed then, as I do now, that a Constitutional amendment may be necessary in order to achieve real reform – reform that would empower the Federal and state governments to limit campaign contributions and expenditures.

Because *Buckley v. Valeo* is a flawed decision, it has doomed the prospects for comprehensive reform by legislation. By equating campaign expenditures with speech, *Buckley* has forced the Congress to take an indirect approach to reform, which has resulted in a complicated and convoluted hodgepodge of laws that special interests continually find ways to circumvent. First Amendment rights are not absolute, and there is a compelling government interest in preventing corruption and preserving the trust of the American people in their democratic institutions.

I know that there are various legislative proposals being crafted in response to *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission*. I encourage the Committee to examine how this decision may affect the ability of foreign corporations, as well as foreign countries, to influence elections in our nation. I also encourage the Committee to look at voluntary spending limits and public financing for congressional campaigns, as well as expenditure limits for non-candidates that will pass Constitutional muster and help to syphon the influence of money from the political process.

I hope the Committee will put forward a legislative proposal and report a bill to the

Senate in a timely manner.

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